

Hike & Kayak Yurt Trip

May Trip

About the Location:

Less than an hour south of Portland lies Champoeg State Heritage Area, a gorgeous destination of forests, fields, and wetlands along the Willamette River. This fertile landscape is the traditional lands of the Atfalati, Ahantchuyuk, and Kalapuya peoples, and later became the pioneer settlement where Oregon's first provisional government was formed in 1843. However, a flood washed away the small town just 18 years later, and today the park is a natural paradise with hiking trails, open meadows, and river access.



We'll kayak on the stretches of river above and below the park, where you can see great blue heron, osprey, and even river otter playing along the bank. Spring waterflow will give us a fun current to pull your boat along, but there are no rapids to navigate and we'll only need paddle the fun direction: downstream! (thanks to the help of a shuttle). Although much of the Willamette Valley is home to hazelnut, strawberry, and grass seed farms today, you would never know it from paddling the river. The ecologically protected "riparian corridor" means that the land that borders the river remains wild and provides habitat for native cottonwood trees and abundant waterfowl. On land, we'll explore the hiking trails, fascinating history of the park, and maybe even play a round of disk golf. One day we'll venture further away and take a day trip to visit the sand beaches and striking bluffs of the Oregon Coast!

What to Expect:

On the first day we'll drive just 45 minutes to our base camp at Champoeg State Park, where we have reserved cozy yurts and campsites. We will alternate days of kayaking and hiking, with one day being a day trip to the coast for a spectacular ocean-side hike. The group expects to hike 3 - 8 miles a day wearing daypacks on trails rated easy to moderate. Kayaking can be physically demanding, but we'll teach you all the kayaking skills you'll need to know, so no experience is necessary. The weather in the Willamette valley this time of year may be sunny or rainy, so it's important to be prepared for a variety of conditions.

For sleeping accommodations, we provide your choice of either single person tents, or shared yurt space (yurt sharing is available if you're signing up with your "pod"). Yurts are like round cabins with canvas walls, and include bunk beds, power, and heat. In a separate building from the yurts are men's and women's restrooms with flush toilets. There are also heated showers in single-user (gender neutral) rooms. We'll set up a central outdoor camp kitchen and gathering spot, where we will work together to cook meals and hang out. On the last day we'll depart early and head back in Portland on Wednesday morning, leaving you time to travel home that same day.

New to Kayaking or Hiking?

No problem! This trip is designed for beginners and we'll teach you everything you need to know. Strong swimming skills are not a pre-requisite since you will be wearing a PFD (personal floatation device, commonly called a lifejacket), but you should be comfortable in deep, moving water. For accessibility accommodations, email outdoors@lclark.edu.

What will we eat?

We eat well on this trip! Some examples of typical meals include: pizza, burritos, and mac & cheese, lots of different salads, and delicious snacks while out hiking during the day! This trip can accommodate most dietary restrictions and allergies, as long as you let us know about them ahead of time in the online Health & Diet Questionnaire. Potable water is available at Champog State Park.

What if I don't have outdoor clothing or equipment?

No problem! Check out our packing lists (located on your trip page) for a description of the essential and optional gear for your trip. We provide all the group gear such as tents, stoves, and cookware. If you don't have your own outdoor clothing or personal equipment, we provide what you'll need for free, as long as you *request the equipment ahead of time* using the online form found on our website.

What are the policies?

Participants on College Outdoors trips are expected to follow all [Lewis & Clark College conduct policies](#). All trips are tobacco, drug, and alcohol free, including vaping, medical cannabis, and tobacco products. Nicotine patches and gum are permitted. College Outdoors has specific policies and procedures to mitigate risks on trips, which are outlined in the [policy brochure](#) and will be explained by your trip leaders. These policies include: Respecting others, food sanitation practices, requiring the use of Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs, sometimes referred to as lifejackets), requiring close-toed shoes, staying 6ft away from cliff edges, and practicing "leave no trace" in the outdoors. Policy violations may result in disciplinary action and/or removal from trips.

You are welcome to join a trip with your best friends or significant other, we just ask that you refrain from "cliques" or other social behavior that may make others feel excluded. This will help us build a fun, inclusive community for everyone on the trip, and you might even make some new best friends!

What are the risks?

The most common injuries which could occur on this trip are blisters on feet (don't forget to break in your boots) and burns from not applying enough sunscreen. *These are all preventable with a little caution and common sense.* If you plan to borrow boots from College Outdoors, you can check them out a couple weeks early and wear them on campus to make sure they fit you well. Stinging insects and other allergens can be present this time of the year, and *people with the potential for severe reactions to allergens must plan to bring their own anaphylaxis kits (EpiPen).* [Learn more about possible risks here.](#) Please note that our trips will often visit remote areas and medical help could be hours away. Our trip leaders generally carry cell phones, and in some cases, satellite phones, but service is not always available in rural or rugged, remote areas. Trip leaders are trained as Wilderness First Responders.

What about Covid-19?

We expect that we will still be managing the Covid-19 situation in May 2021, so we are planning all May Trips to follow Oregon's guidelines for Phase 1 of reopening. Visit our website for up to date plans, protocols, and expectations: https://www.lclark.edu/programs/college_outdoors/covid-19-mitigation-for-may-trips/

More questions? Just ask! We LOVE to talk about trips!